

Notice of Exemption

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To:
Office of Planning and Research
For U.S. Mail:
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From:
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, CA 93710

Street Address:
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Project Title: Major Amendment No. 1 to California Endangered Species Act (CESA) Incidental Take Permit (ITP) No. 2081-2020-047-04 for the Southern California Gas Company eTS 38117 Cross Valley Station Project (Project)

Project Location: The Project is located approximately one mile southeast of the community of Valley Acres and State Route 119 in Kern County, within Assessor's Parcel Number 298-190-05, United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5 Minute Quad Map Taft, Township 31 South, Range 24 East, Section 33, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian; Latitude 35.194864°N, Longitude -119.398549°W.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has issued a CESA (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.) ITP and this Major Amendment No. 1 to authorize Southern California Gas Company to incidentally take San Joaquin antelope squirrel which is listed as threatened species under CESA (Fish & G. Code § 2050 et seq.; see Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 670.5, subd. (b)(6)(B)).

The Project includes activities necessary to make the Cross Valley Station valves safe and operational and provide gas supply to customers in Taft and Valley Acres, Kern County, California. Project activities consist of the replacement of a malfunctioning pressure limiting station and communications shelter with electronics within the Cross Valley Station where natural gas pressure is measured and regulated at the connection of Line 7053 to Line 85. Major Amendment No. 1 makes six changes to the ITP. This Major Amendment No. 1 will: 1) add an additional area south of the Station that needs to be excavated to fully expose the pipeline to the Project Area; 2) move and increase the size of the existing Staging Area in the Project Description and add an additional Staging Area next to the Station; 3) add activities related to cross compression to the Project Description and Covered Activities; 4) increase the total footprint of the Project by 0.003 acre; 5) allow excavation areas to be inspected for trapped animals only once per day by the Designated Biologist and/or Designated Monitor on non-work days; and 6) revise and accordingly replace Figure 2 of the ITP with Figure 2a depicting the modified Project Area and increased and additional Staging Areas.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

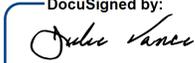
Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project: Southern California Gas Company, Juan Jimenez, Project Manager, 1050 Overland Court, San Dimas, California 91773.

Exempt Status:

- Statutory Exemption. California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15269, subdivision (b); Public Resources Code, section 21080, subdivision (b)(2)
 Categorical Exemption.

Reasons why project is exempt: See Attachment

CDFW Contact Person: Craig Bailey (Sr. Environmental Scientist, Supervisory), 559-243-4014, extension 227

DocuSigned by:

Signature: _____
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Date: 12/18/2020

Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager, Central Region

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Attachment to Notice of Exemption

California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2020-047-04 Major Amendment No. 1 Southern California Gas Company eTS 38117 Cross Valley Station Project (Project)

Approval of this Project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 *et seq.*) because the Project is subject to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15269, subdivision (b), "Emergency repairs to publicly or privately owned service facilities necessary to maintain service essential to the public health, safety, or welfare" and Public Resources Code, section 21080, subdivision (b)(2), "Emergency repairs to public service facilities necessary to maintain service". "Emergency" is defined as "a sudden, unexpected occurrence, involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to, life, health, property, or essential public services" (Pub. Resources Code, § 21060.3).

The Project includes the replacement of a malfunctioning pressure limiting station and communications shelter with electronics within the Cross Valley Station (Station) where natural gas pressure is measured and regulated at the connection of Line 7053 to Line 85. The replacement is needed in order to make the Station safe and operational and to provide natural gas supply to customers in the City of Taft and community of Valley Acres in Kern County, California. The natural gas supply will be critical to meet the winter heating demand for these communities and as temperatures are decreasing, the need to complete the project is urgent. On December 14, 2020, the Permittee requested a change to the Project to be able to complete the Project as scheduled and as quickly as possible. This change will add an additional excavation area to access the pipeline, move and add additional Staging Areas, add cross compression as a Covered Activity, add equipment to be used at the site during construction, and allowing excavations to be inspected once per day on non-work days. The additional excavation area will increase the total Project footprint by 0.003 acre, but this increase will not increase the impacts to the Covered Species habitat because this area is within an existing disturbed roadway.

CDFW has determined that although this Amendment may result in an increase in take of the Covered Species, it will not cause an increase in Covered Species habitat impacts because the additional area is within existing disturbed roadway and the additional impacts of the taking will be minimized and fully mitigated through implementation of the Conditions of Approval. Because the impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated, there will be no increase in Project impacts to the Covered Species with this Amendment. Impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated through the implementation of measures required by Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2020-047-04, as amended. Measures include: 1) Weekly Compliance Reports; 2) establishment of avoidance zones; 3) worker education; and 4) permanent habitat protection.